

# Neighborhood Watch Program



**Sanford Police Department  
815 W 13<sup>th</sup> Street  
Sanford, FL 32771**

**407.688.5070 ext. 6008**

**[www.sanfordpolice.org](http://www.sanfordpolice.org)**

# Benefits of Neighborhood Watch Program

The **8** most important benefits of being involved in your own Neighborhood Watch program are:

1

**Neighborhood policing by you and your neighbors**, together with your own police department, creates a greater sense of security, well-being, and reduction of fear of crime because you know you and your neighbors will **“LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER.”**

2

**Reduce the risk of being a crime victim.** You are taught how to take preventive measures that substantially decrease the likelihood of becoming a crime victim. The instances of other crimes such as vandalism, graffiti, personal assault, auto theft and other personal crimes also decrease.

3

**The Neighborhood Watch program trains you how to observe and report suspicious activities** occurring in your neighborhood. It trains you on what information law enforcement officers need when you report a crime.

4

**Knowing your neighbor** is an important feature and benefit of this program. You get to know participant's regular patterns so you can see when something is unusual. You get to know how to contact them quickly.

5

**You have greater access to criminal activity information.** Neighborhood Watch programs are designed to keep participants informed of crime trends and patterns so they will be better prepared to spot criminal activity.

6

**Participants get on-going training in how to protect themselves and their property.** Personal safety awareness, whether you are at home, in public, or in your vehicle, and knowing what “to do and not to do” could prevent you from becoming a victim.

7

**Posting Neighborhood Watch signs on your street** and labels or decals in your windows tells a criminal that (a) you are not an easy target, that (b) they are probably being watched and (c) you have taken the steps necessary to deter crime in your neighborhood.

8

**Address issues of mutual interest** by getting together with your neighbors on a regular basis (monthly, quarterly, or what ever you wish). These may be for other crime prevention, fire protection, local planning, or other projects which you alone may say, “Why don't they do something about...!” As a community, as an organization already working together as a Neighborhood Watch group, you have the stepping stone needed to getting things done.

# Get Involved with Neighborhood Watch



By participating in a program where **"We Look Out For Each Other!"**, you can make a real difference in attacking crime in your community through your Neighborhood Watch involvement.

Teen-agers, seniors, home-owners or renters, students, housewives, business people, retirees, the disabled...Yes everyone in the neighborhood can participate in Neighborhood Watch no matter their age, occupation, race or religion. You just have to be involved in improving your neighborhood.

Make your neighborhood a safer, more pleasant place to live by joining your neighbors in this program. The cost? Your time and commitment. That is a small price to pay to increase the safety and security of your home and neighborhood.

You will be given instruction in observation and recognition, you will learn about suspicious activities and sounds, you will learn about home and auto security and you will become a participant in your Neighborhood Watch program.

You will learn about your neighbors, their families, their hours of work and be able to protect them while at the same time they will be protecting you. This mutual benefit goes beyond security of the neighborhood to improving the quality of your life with better friendships and acquaintances. Get-togethers, such as potluck dinners and block parties are encouraged in the program.

You will add your **"eyes and ears"** to those of the Police Department which cannot be everywhere, all the time, by keeping a watchful eye and open ear to what is happening in your neighborhood. You will extend their ability to provide security by reporting anything unusual or suspicious, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so they can follow up on your leads. **What you will not do is get physically involved with any activity you report or apprehension of any suspicious persons.** This is the job of the law enforcement agency.

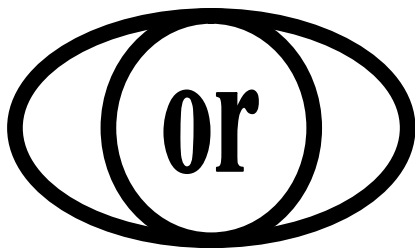
***You can get involved.  
You will make a difference!***

# How and Why Neighborhood Watch Works

The key to success in any Neighborhood Watch program are the *participants'* **Willingness to Look Out For Each Other** and the ability of each individual *participant* to observe and recognize what is suspicious, **then immediately reporting it.**



1 to 1

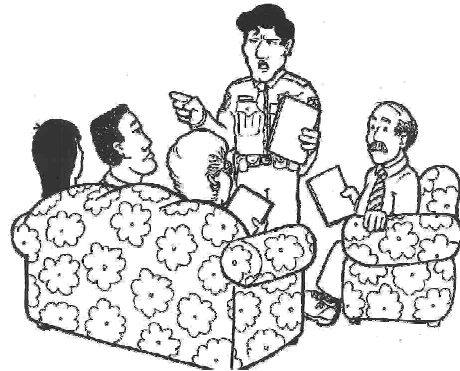


4500 to 1

Why doesn't your local police or sheriff do this? Nationally, there is probably only one law enforcement officer **on patrol** at any one time for every 4,500 residents. The availability of an unlimited number of Neighborhood Watch Participants available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, tremendously multiplies the effectiveness of any law enforcement department's effort to prevent crime.

## Neighborhood Watch Works like this:

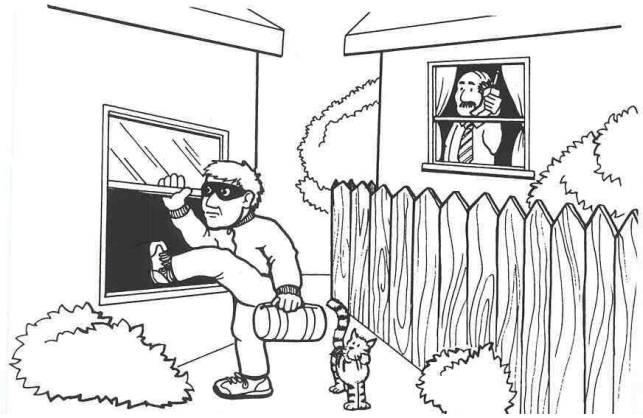
1. Neighbors join together to provide information about their households to one another.
2. Participants receive training in **observation** techniques and **recognition** skills in order to recognize suspicious activities.
3. Upon seeing a suspicious activity or a crime, Participants **immediately report** their observation to the police department.
4. Law enforcement responds and apprehends the suspect criminal. If the suspect is not caught in the act of committing the crime, your recognition of the suspect and your notes will be very vital.
5. As a Participant your cooperation with the police department is rewarded by you having saved your neighbor's property or even their life.





# Observation

Observation takes many forms. From your home, a mobile home, an apartment or condo you can determine your best observation points. From your auto, truck or van you can observe both the road and other activities. Many people walk or jog as a daily routine, going to and from the store or work, or for their own physical fitness. Observation and recognition skills play a large part of your mutual protection. In rural areas, your truck, tractor, snowmobile or horse give you the opportunity to be mobile and to observe. Whatever your means of observation, use your head to determine if what you are observing is of a suspicious nature. Remember, observations are not only made by sight, but also from sounds and smells.



# Recognition

Recognition is of equal importance. Learn how to get a good description of the suspect, identify their vehicle, their method of operation and their activity. Recognize that when your neighbor is away on vacation, a stranger should not be coming in and out of their house. In a rural area, recognize that your neighbor probably is not aware that someone is beginning to cut down his 200-year old walnut tree.



***In any situation, use your head, and recognize what is routine and what is suspicious.***

Time is critical in apprehension. When you see or hear something suspicious, call the police department ***immediately***.



# History of Neighborhood Watch



In early 1972, the National Sheriffs Association developed a model program for today's Neighborhood Watch program. At the time Chiefs of Police and Sheriffs from around the country were requesting a program that would squelch the increasing burglary rate across the country.

At that time, society increasingly became more mobile and faster paced. More households had both spouses working. The neighborhoods become deserted during the day. The term, "latchkey kids," came in to use. Neighbors stopped being concerned about their neighbors' property and began keeping more to themselves. The unity and cohesion of the traditional neighborhood gradually deteriorated. Neighbors were not looking out for each other.

Criminals recognized this trend and this opportunity. They began to take advantage of this knowledge. Law enforcement agencies alone were not able to keep up with the alarming rise in burglaries as thieves, without causing alarm or suspicion, invaded neighborhoods where no one was at home. It was also noted that communities able to obtain the assistance of their citizens in observing, recognizing and reporting suspicious or criminal activities were much better able to keep the burglary rate down.

*"Burglary is a crime of opportunity."*

Although the rate of specific crimes such as burglary decreased tremendously, a further benefit has been the substantial reduction of other crimes as well. All because of citizen-participant involvement.

Neighborhood Watch works because people wanted to be more active in making their communities safe. Because of budget and manpower limitations at virtually every level of law enforcement, it is impractical to place a law enforcement officer into each neighborhood full time. Residents within a neighborhood know who belongs there and who does not, what looks normal, what looks suspicious and these same residents are in the neighborhood full time. By becoming the eyes, ears and yes, even the noses aiding law enforcement officers to combat crime in their neighborhood they can both live in a safer place and stretch their law enforcement dollar. By training and practice, they can improve their skills.

Neighborhood Watch programs have proven themselves to be effective in uniting the community and improving their well-being as well. The idea of building better friendships among your neighbors is an old-fashion idea, a good one, and the distance these friendships and programs can go is limited only by your imagination.

*"Know your neighbor."*

# Know Your Neighbors



Neighborhood Watch begins with you knowing your own neighbors. Our motto, "**We Look Out For Each Other!**", means exactly what it says. As a *participant*, your ability to observe and recognize what is usual and customary comes as a result of paying attention and focusing your mind on the daily, ordinary, happenings in your neighborhood.

Being a Neighborhood Watch participant *does not* mean you are being a "busybody," or you are invading anyone's privacy, or that you are snooping. It *does* mean that you are aware for potential trouble and you are living up to our motto, '**We Look Out For Each Other!**' And as a vigilant neighbor, you are prepared to call your law enforcement agency when you suspect potential trouble with no hesitation.

## You should know:

- ◆ What are all the addresses, styles and colors of houses in my Neighborhood Watch group.
- ◆ Who lives in each dwelling?
- ◆ What are their ages?
- ◆ What hours does each person work?
- ◆ What cars do they drive?
- ◆ When do the routine maintenance people or household helpers come by?

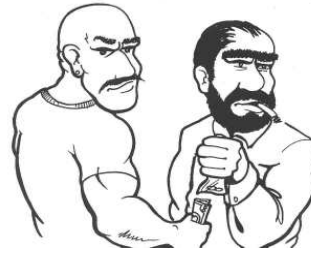
**"We  
Look  
Out  
For  
Each  
Other"**

- ◆ Who is elderly and/or infirm?
- ◆ Which dwellings have kids who are home alone at times?
- ◆ When are they going on vacation?
- ◆ Who may be into drugs or gangs?
- ◆ Who are having juvenile delinquency or other family problems?
- ◆ Who just moved into the neighborhood?

Your neighborhood Family Data Sheet Summary and the Telephone Tree, shown on the following page, are important sources of information.

With knowledge and regular practice, much can be accomplished by simply observing and recognizing what appears to be ordinary, you should be able to detect potential trouble.

# Recognizing Suspicious Activity



## What is suspicious and when do you call the police?

Suspicious activity is anything that looks like it could be connected with criminal behavior — someone casing a neighborhood, forcing open a door, grabbing a child; screaming or pounding coming from a nearby residence or apartment; of strong chemical odors coming from an inappropriate building, are but a handful of examples. If the activity is or appears to be threatening to property or people, immediately report the suspicious activity by calling 9-1-1. Time is critical in apprehending criminals. The following is a list of suspicious activities and the criminal activity that might be happening:

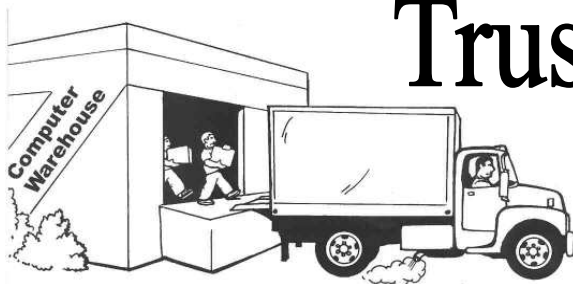
### People

A person, persons, groups of young people, adult(s) or gang(s):



- ◆ Gathering (loitering) for an extended or unusual period of time.  
*Possible burglary, arson, or drug dealing.*
- ◆ Behaving strangely.  
*Possibly on drugs or illegal activity.*
- ◆ With any sort of weapon(s).  
*Possibly planning any number of crimes.*
- ◆ Carrying, concealing or transporting anything unusual.  
*Possible burglar carrying stolen property.*
- ◆ Looking into cars.  
*Possibly casing cars for theft of car or its contents.*
- ◆ Selling or conducting business on a street corner, park or other place where business is not licensed.
- ◆ Running, especially if carrying something of value.  
*Possible suspect fleeing scene of crime.*
- ◆ Creating any type of disturbance  
*Disturbing the Peace or covering up noise of some other activity.*
- ◆ Going door to door, especially if someone goes to the rear of the residence.  
*Possibly casing the neighborhood.*
- ◆ Loiters around schools, parks or on your street.  
*Possible burglar, sex offense, drugs or arson.*



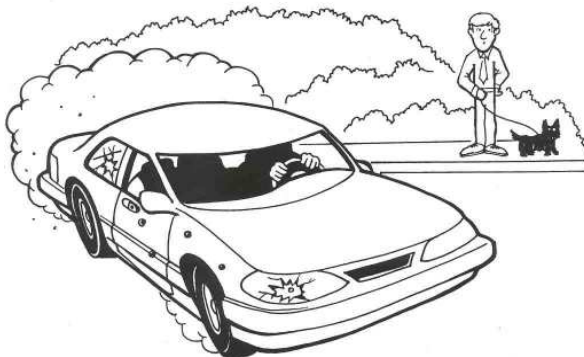


# Trust Your Instincts

## Call Immediately!

### Vehicles

- ◆ An occupied vehicle parked for a long period of time.  
*Possibly casing the neighborhood.*
- ◆ A vehicle driving around your neighborhood repeatedly.  
*Possibly casing the neighborhood, drug dealing, sexual deviate or child molester.*
- ◆ Departing from a location at night with its lights off.  
*Possible burglar, assault violation or robber.*



- ◆ The vehicle is in unusually bad condition, with signs of a recent accident, broken windows or bullet holes in the car.  
*Possibly involved in a drive-by shooting or a hit and run accident.*
- ◆ Business is being conducted out of the vehicle.  
*Possibly selling stolen items or drugs.*
- ◆ An over-loaded vehicle that is parked, or traveling in your neighborhood.  
*Possible burglar.*
- ◆ Someone being forced into a vehicle.  
*Possible kidnapping, assault or attempted rape.*

- ◆ A parked car with the engine running.  
*Possibly a get-away car for a burglary.*
- ◆ Odd property seen in vehicles, such as TVs, stereos, weapons.  
*Possible stolen property.*
- ◆ Locked vehicle that someone is trying to forcibly enter.  
*Possible theft of car or contents in progress.*
- ◆ Older children or adults, who are not from the neighborhood, bicycling randomly or repeatedly without a purposeful destination.  
*Possible theft of homes and/or garages.*
- ◆ Person detaching mechanical parts or accessories from vehicle.  
*Possible theft or vandalism in progress.*
- ◆ Vehicle being loaded with valuables if parked by closed business or unoccupied house.  
*Possible burglary in progress.*
- ◆ Abandoned vehicle parked on your block.  
*Possible stolen vehicle.*



# Suspicious Sounds

Using your ears to detect suspicious activities is very helpful in combating crime. Sounds may only last a few seconds and may go undetected. Here are some sounds which require close attention, and reporting:

## ***SCREAMS FOR HELP***



Always assume the scream is real and someone desperately needs help. Quickly try to determine the location, source and nature of the scream and ***immediately*** call the police. Heroes can be wounded or killed. **Remember that apprehension is the job of your police department.**

## ***CONTINUOUS SCREAMING***

This type of screaming probably is a result of someone being beaten, hurt or mistreated. Especially listen for victims' cries of "Oh's" and "Ow's". Quickly try to determine the location, source and nature of the scream and ***immediately*** call the police department.

## ***SCREAMING AND CURSING***

This type of screaming is probably a domestic violence incident — between husband and wife, parent and child, two people who are intent on hurting each other but not in a life-threatening way. Determine the location, source and nature of the scream and call the police department.

## ***GUN SHOT SOUNDS***

***Immediately*** call the police department. Provide as much information as to the number of shots fired and their source or location.



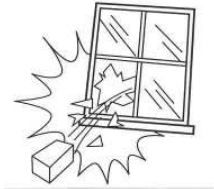
## ***ALARMS ACTIVATED***

Fire, home-burglary, business and car alarms must always be considered as real. Determine the location, source and nature of the alarm and call the police department.



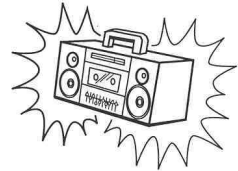
## ***BREAKING GLASS***

If you hear the sound of breaking glass, call the police department's office. This is one of the most common method of forced entry into a home, apartment or automobile.



## ***LOUD MUSIC***

Loud music is usually an annoyance and you can report it as any other nuisance. However, it is often used to cover up other criminal activities. If you hear loud music covering the cry of a screaming person, immediately call the police department.



## ***FORCING, PRYING OR POUNDING SOUNDS***

If something is being forced, pried or pounded you should determine the location, source and nature of the sounds and if your suspicion is aroused, immediately call the police department.

## ***DOGS BARKING***

Continuous barking of a dog in an unusual manner is cause for alarm. Determine the location of the dog and call the police department.



# ***"Listen and Report."***

# Directions and Locations

In order to give the police department an accurate report of a crime or suspicious activity, you must be able to give an accurate description of the location. The description includes the direction; north, south, east or west. If you have trouble with directions, always remember the sun sets in the west. If you are facing west, east is behind you, north is to your right and south is to your left. The sun and moon rise in the east, set in the west. City maps will almost always have north at the top of the map.

Learn the directions in which your streets run; north and south, east and west, perhaps even northwest and southeast. It is important to know directions for reporting information, because saying the suspect went right or left is of little help and often confuses the description.

A location description is best given by

1. using the specific address,
2. where at the location the incident is occurring,
3. how is it happening.

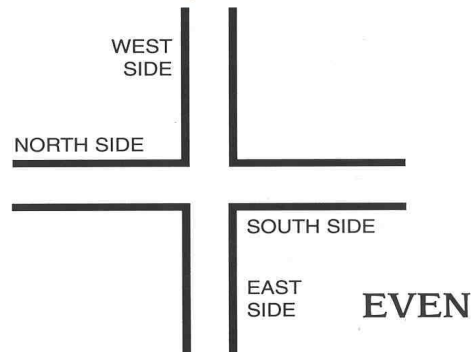
## **Examples:**

*"Two men just came running out of the McDonald's at 123 South main and are heading east on Second Street in a blue Dodge van."*

*"I am hearing screams coming from a 2<sup>nd</sup> floor apartment in the rear of 2842 S. Chesapeake."*

*"Something suspicious, ma be drugs, is happening on the south east corner of Vincent and 23<sup>rd</sup>."*

ODD



**NOW - SEE** is an acronym to help you remember which side of the street is north or west, south or east, by the address numbers.

**NOW** translates to North ODD

West - Odd numbers are almost always on the North and West sides.

**SEE** translates to South EVEN

East - Even numbers are almost always on the South and East sides.



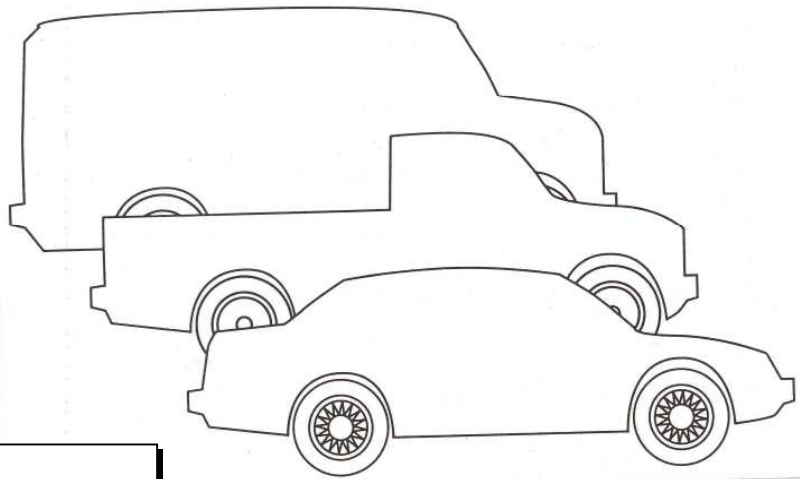
## **BE SPECIFIC**

When providing information, give the exact location, the best possible description of the suspects and their vehicle.

## **REMEMBER**

WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHO, HOW and WHY is what your police department needs to know.

# Vehicle Details



## ***KIND OF VEHICLE***

- ◆ Car - 2 door, 4 door, sports car, convertible, hard top, jeep, off-road
- ◆ Camper - style, on the back of a pick-up
- ◆ Van - station wagon, windowed or solid sides
- ◆ Truck - small pick -up, large pick-up, flat bed, stake truck, boxed cargo truck
- ◆ Motorcycle - small or large, side car, domestic or foreign, street or dirt
- ◆ Recreation or SUV

## ***COLORS***

- ◆ Single color - two colors
- ◆ Color and shade of that color (blue - midnight blue, powder blue)
- ◆ Window tinting - rear and /or side windows, color of tint

## ***OTHER FEATURES***

- ◆ Any identifying bumper stickers, dents, bullet holes, broken windows?
- ◆ Did it have a cellular phone or CB?
- ◆ Was it lowered or raised from the standard production model?
- ◆ Was it damaged in any way? Had it been in a crash, body damage?

## ***MAKE OF VEHICLE***

- ◆ Ford, Chevrolet, Mercury, Oldsmobile, Buick, Plymouth, Chrysler, Dodge?
- ◆ Honda, Toyota, Nissan, Isuzu, Mazda?
- ◆ BMW, Mercedes, Volvo, Fiat, Volkswagen?
- ◆ Perhaps you can only describe it as domestic or foreign—that's OK.

## ***MODEL***

- ◆ Bronco, Mustang, Thunderbird, Taurus, Colt, Camry, Cutless, Civic?

## ***YEAR***

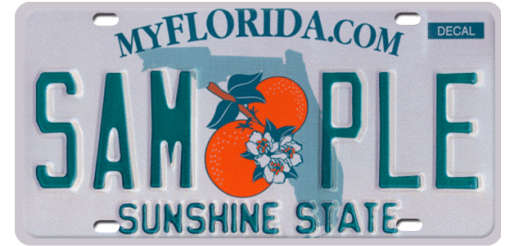
- ◆ If you know the year of the vehicle, great. If you don't, was it new, nearly new, a few years old, several years old, really a wreck?

## ***License Plates***

- ◆ Was the license plates form Florida or another state?
- ◆ Which design was the license plate, the tree, the fish, or the old west wagon?
- ◆ Were they vanity plates?



# License Plates



## Law enforcement counts on your ability to:

1. Memorize the license plate number of any suspicious vehicle, and
2. WRITE IT DOWN exactly as you observed it.

It is of VITAL IMPORTANCE in quickly observing, recognizing and reporting the license plate number to your police department in order to pursue and apprehend someone involved in criminal activity.

With the multitude of license plate designs issued by our 50 states, the 12 Canadian provinces and the 32 Mexican estados, it is also important to be able to properly describe the license plate and any unusual features.

Unusual features include, in some states, the County designation, environmental messages, universities, veteran groups, etc. on the plates.



If nothing else, remember the colors of the background and the letters and numbers on the plate. The phonetic alphabet will be helpful in doing this.

## Special Note:

If you can't read a license plate number because it has letters or numbers taped over the original letters and numbers, or is so badly damaged, covered or unusually dirty to render it illegible, get a description of the vehicle, its location, and the direction it may be headed if it is moving, and call the police quickly.

A used car with neither plates nor vehicle registration papers in the window is immediately suspicious. When you see this, get the best description of both the vehicle and its occupants and call this information into the police department.





# Reporting A Crime

If you know a crime is happening, or suspect that something suspicious or dangerous is going on, or even if potential trouble exists, do the following:

Determine if it is an **EMERGENCY**.

An emergency requires **IMMEDIATE POLICE DEPARTMENT, FIRE AND/OR MEDICAL RESPONSE**.

*Example: A person is facing a life or death situation or property is in the process of being stolen or jeopardized. Immediately call 911.*

If the situation is routine, not life threatening, then call the non-emergency number, **688-5199**. Remember: if you are in doubt, call **911**.

**What, When, Where, and Who** are the first four things you need to know to report a crime. **How** and **Why** are very important, but many times you don't know these answers.

When calling, here is what to provide, and what you may be asked:



**FIRST** You will be asked what is your emergency? Police, Fire or Medical? What is your location, your name and phone number? Are you in danger?

**WHAT** is happening. Try to be as specific as possible. *Example: "This is an emergency. Two people have just been wounded and the gunman has fled."*

**WHAT** is needed. Police, Fire, Medical?

**WHEN** is it happening? Is it now? Is it about to happen? How long ago did it occur?

**WHERE** is it happening? Give the specific address and directions. *Example: "The shooting happened at McDonald's at 123 South Main, in Albany."*

**WHO** is involved? Quick descriptions of the victims and the perpetrators need to be communicated. *Example: "Two teen-age boys are wounded. The suspects were male(specify ethnic background), about 20 years old, black hair, (etc.) driving a blue Dodge van, license ABC 555."*

The same series of questions need to be answered when you are calling in a non-emergency situation. A non-emergency situation is one in which immediate response is not necessary, but does require a police officers. *Example: A stolen battery, stereo or cellular phone in your car does require attention, but not immediate response.*

Your police department appreciates you acting as their extra eyes and ears. Sometimes your suspicions are unfounded. If you are wrong, they understand you will not always be right, but you will not be in trouble with them. As a good citizen and a Neighborhood Watch participant, your job is to give them the information you base your suspicions on.

***"Don't hesitate to call."***

Reporting is the first step in helping to stop crime.

You are making your neighborhood a safer place for you and your family.

# Neighborhood Watch

## Participant's Responsibility

As a Neighborhood Watch participant, you have a responsibility to:

1. Learn your neighbor's names, including all occupants of their residences. Be able to recognize them and their vehicles without any hesitation.
2. Attend all Neighborhood Watch meetings.
3. Keep your personal copies of the Neighborhood Watch Family Data Summary Sheets, Block map, and Telephone Tree in an easily accessible, secure place and continually updated with any new information provided by your Block Captain.
4. Properly identify all property using the guidelines suggested at your Neighborhood Watch meetings, in Operation ID, in other home security programs and maintain an accurate inventory of your valuables.
5. Implement all security measures suggested by your police department after a security survey has been completed in your home.
6. Learn the techniques of getting an accurate description of a suspect or a vehicle. Practice these by writing them down from memory so when the need arises to actually report a suspicious incident, you are prepared.
7. Keep an eye on your neighbor's homes and report any suspicious activities to your police department. Again, write the description down so you forget nothing. **DO NOT DELAY REPORTING.** A few minutes delay is enough time to reduce the chances of ever catching the criminal. **No exceptions** to this rule insures that:

***"We Look Out For Each Other!"***

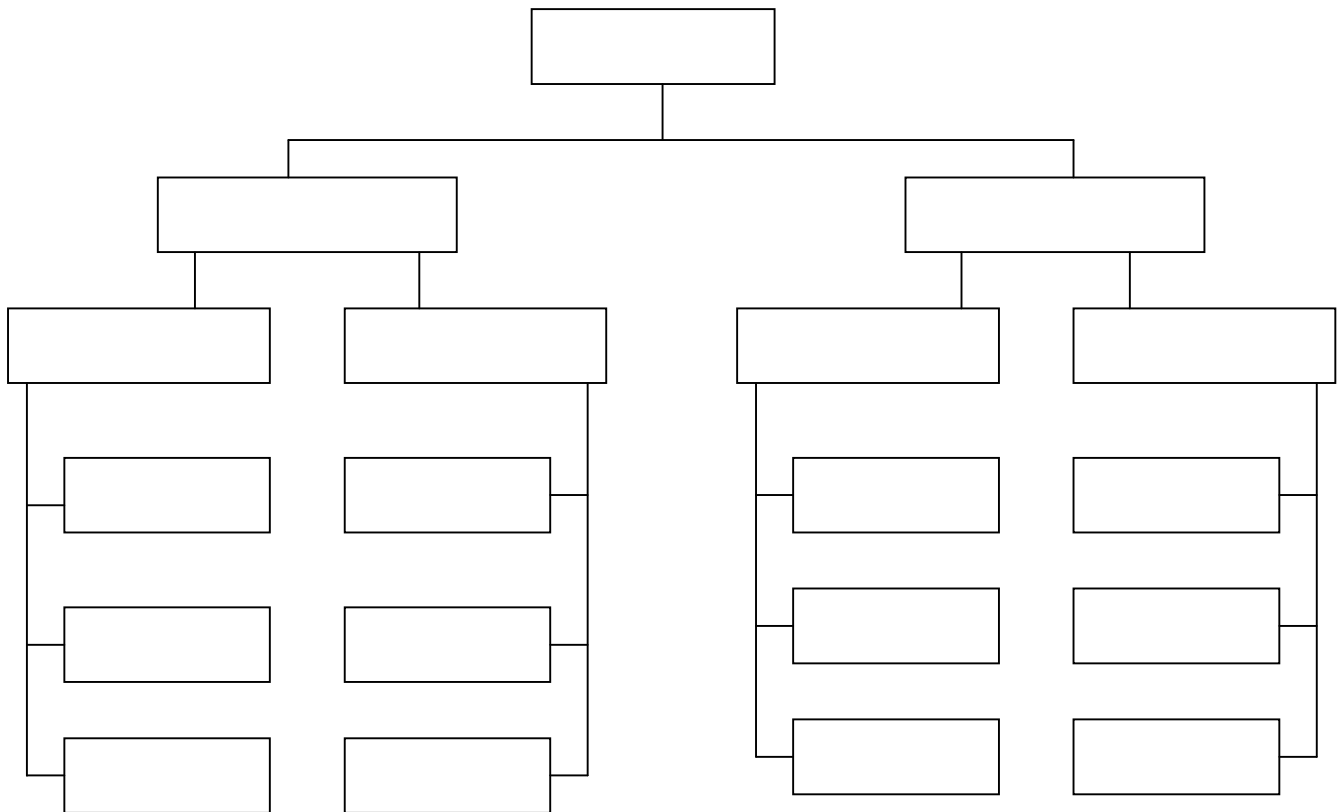
**WARNING**



**ALL SUSPICIOUS PERSONS AND ACTIVITIES  
ARE IMMEDIATELY REPORTED TO THE  
SANFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT**

8. Post Neighborhood Watch window warnings around your home. Report vandalized or missing signs so they can be replaced.
9. Teach children respect for the law and crime prevention techniques around the neighborhood and in their personal life and safety away from your home.
10. Remember always that your responsibility is to report crime. **Do not take any risks to prevent a crime or try to make an arrest. The responsibility for apprehending criminals belongs to the police department.**
11. If you are leaving home for an extended period of time, notify your neighbors and Block Captains. Arrange to have your mail picked up or put on "Temporary Hold" at your Post Office. Newspapers should be picked up by a neighbor. Timers to activate lights, TV, and radio should be set. Garbage cans should be taken in. Don't leave signals saying "no one is at home."
12. *Get Involved! Look Out For Each Other! Be a good neighbor.*

# Neighborhood Watch Telephone Tree



# Neighborhood Watch Block Map

Below is an example of a completed map. For each home, the color, street number, family name, home and work phone numbers are listed plus the street names and compass directions are indicated. Homes that are "vacant" and "not participating" should be shown.

<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	Johnson Drive	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
		Second Street
<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>		<div><div></div><div></div></div>